CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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NOTE VERBALE DATED 19 APRIL 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF CHILE ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE CONCERNING THE SIGNING OF THE PELINDABA TREATY, BY MEANS OF WHICH THE DENUCLEARIZED STATUS OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT WAS ESTABLISHED

The Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and has the honour to attach the text of a statement made by the Government of Chile concerning the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty establishing the denuclearized status of the African continent.

The Permanent Mission of Chile requests the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament to arrange for the attached document to be distributed as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

GE.96-61144 (E)

Statement

The Government of the Republic of Chile particularly welcomes the signing in Cairo of the Pelindaba Treaty, an international instrument establishing a new denuclearized zone whose geographical scope encompasses the whole continent of Africa.

Under the provisions of the Treaty, the 49 signatory States have made a historic commitment to renounce atomic weapons and prohibit both the conduct of tests and the accumulation of nuclear waste on their territory.

At the same time, the fact that - among the nuclear Powers - China, the United States and the United Kingdom have signed Protocols I and II to the Treaty, and France has signed Protocol III in addition to those mentioned, has been noted with singular satisfaction.

The promotion of denuclearized zones has been a constant feature of our foreign policy. Chile is convinced that such zones constitute an effective means of ensuring non-proliferation and one which should therefore be extended to other geographical areas. Consequently, our country has given full backing to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Antarctic (Antarctic Treaty), Latin America (Tlatelolco), the South Pacific (Rarotonga), South-East Asia (Bangkok) and now Africa, and welcomes the proposal made by President Hosni Mubarak for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

As it hails this happy initiative, which constitutes a major milestone on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons, the Government of Chile also wishes to emphasize its timeliness and scope, particularly in the context of the negotiations being pursued by the international community for the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty by the middle of this year.

Santiago, 15 April 1996